

Author: Violeta Chacon

Co Author: Luisa Madrigal (Cardiovascular Surgery Unit of Guatemala), Luisa Palma, Hely Bautista (Duo Publicidad, Guatemala), Joaquin Barnoya (Washington University in St Louis, United States)

Topic: Law and regulation in public health nutrition

Title: Qualitative assessment of adolescents' and caregivers' perceptions of a front-of-package labeling system to encourage healthier beverage choices in Guatemala

Presentation Type: Oral

Introduction: Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) are a significant contributor to obesity. Therefore, it is urgent to decrease SSBs consumption. Warning labels on food products are now being explored to inform consumers. A Nutrition Facts Label (NFL), that displays nutrient amount per serving, is mandatory in Guatemala. However, most consumers have difficulty understanding these labels. We sought to explore adolescents' and caregivers' perceptions of three front-of-package (FoP) labeling systems to encourage healthier beverage choices in Guatemala. **Methods:** During April 2016, we will conduct six focus groups (two with adolescents, two with male, and two with female primary caregivers) from public and private schools in Guatemala City. Focus groups will evaluate perceptions and barriers to use the current NFL and perceptions on three FoP labeling systems that include: (1) amount of sugar and the Guideline Daily Amount (GDA), (2) amount of sugar and GDA encircled by a traffic-light, and (3) a warning label with a straightforward message informing about the health hazards of SSBs consumption. **Results:** Data collection will be completed by May 2016. We hypothesize that the current NFL will be perceived as difficult to understand and not useful to encourage healthy beverage choices. Furthermore, we expect that the warning label will be perceived as the most effective to inform about the hazards associated with SSBs consumption. **Conclusion:** We expect this study to provide qualitative information to support the development and further evaluation of FoP labeling systems that can be used by the Guatemalan government to better inform consumers.